

Charles Dickens

Bleak House By Charles Dickens (1812-1870)

The Chancery Court had jurisdiction over all matters of equity, including administration of estates, the guardianship of orphans, and disputed property disbursement. In Dickens' time, some cases could take years to be settled, changing the lives of those involved.

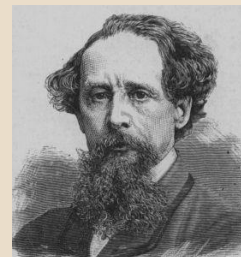
Esther Summerson, a young woman raised in a tough and unloving atmosphere, is unexpectedly requested to be a companion to two teenage orphans, Richard Carstone and Ada Clare, for whom the court has appointed as guardian, John Jarndyce. They take up residence at Mr. Jarndyce's home, Bleak House. The story of their lives and fortunes is the main thrust of the novel, and is related at times through the eyes of Esther, whose gentle point of view gives the reader a different and more intimate perspective.

Several other colorful characters are wound into the story. Nearly insane Miss Flite, who for years has attended court every day, with her little folder of documents, is ever hopeful of a settlement. Mr. Boythorn is a boisterous friend of Jarndyce who has a vendetta with Sir Leicester Dedlock. The Jellyby Family, invariably on the verge of a disaster, is neglected by their Mother who is obsessed with an overseas project. The Smallweed family is mean and avaricious – squeezing money from poor clients. Mr. Skimpole is the childlike captivating friend of Mr. Jarndyce who sees no harm in living off everybody else. Mr. Guppy fawns after Esther, and plots to steal documents with his friend Weevle. Mr. Woodcourt is a gentle surgeon and family friend, who becomes a hero.

Read by Mil Nicholson; total running time: 39:24:50. Dedicated Proof-Listener: HeartofTexas. Meta-Coordinator & Cataloging: Arielle Lipshaw.

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